

[23 March, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

Miscellaneous. The percentage Expenditure on different groups of Working Expenses during 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 is given below:—

| Description | (in percentage) | | |
|--|-----------------|---------|-----------|
| | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-2000 |
| General Superintendence & Services | 5.52 | 5.48 | 5.40 |
| Repairs & Maintenance | 34.04 | 33.31 | 33.48 |
| Operation | 52.25 | 52.53 | 52.48 |
| Staff welfare, retirement benefits & Misc. | 8.19 | 8.68 | 8.64 |

Merger of NISCOM and INSDOC

3160. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the report of the CSIR Review Committee with Abid Hussain as Chairman, had recommended to merge National Institute of Science communication, formerly PID and Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre, to enable consolidation of information service around a strong National Science Library;

(b) whether the above recommendation has been accepted;

(c) if so, the details of action taken; and

(d) if not, the reasons for the rejection thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) Yes Sir, the Abid Hussain Committee in its Report of 1986 had *inter-alia* recommended that PID and INSDOC should be merged as this would consolidate information service around a strong National Science Library, a networked anticipatory information service and a translation service. The Abid Hussain Committee report was remitted by the then Prime Minister of India to the Science Advisory Council (SAC) to the Prime Minister for their observation. In regard to the merger, SAC has suggested that the purpose of INSDOC should be re-examined. These recommendations were considered by the CSIR Society,

Chaired by the Prime Minister wherein it was decided that the functioning of INSDOC be reviewed.

(d) Does not arise.

Discovery of Planets beyond Pluto by Indian Scientists

3161. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether, as reported in the Deccan Chronicle dated 21st January, 2001, two Indian Scientists have claimed to have discovered two more planets in the Solar System beyond the orbit of Pluto, the ninth Planet;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the claim has been accepted by the International Science Congress if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what steps are proposed to be taken to provide assistance and encouragement to the concerned scientists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (d) The Deccan Chronicle has reported a claim by two scientists that there exist two more planets beyond Pluto. The reported claim is not an observational discovery. It is an untested prediction, based on a formula proposed by the authors, not generally known in the astronomical community.

The Titius-Bode law cited by the authors is also an empirical formula without as yet, a physical basis. The predicted diameters and masses of the proposed planets are large, and as such the planets should have been observed already. The authors do not have clear reasons why they are unobservable by the modern optical and radio telescopes. In fact, dozens of asteroid-like objects beyond the orbits of Pluto and Neptune have been detected by astronomers since 1990s, that have much smaller sizes which suggest that such planets are not present. The reported claims does not seem to have been seriously considered by the astronomical community nor has a detailed paper